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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES
OF PHILADELPHIA.

VOL. II. MAY AND JUNE, 1845. No. 9.

Stated Meeting, May 6, 1845.

VICE PRESIDENT MORTON in the Chair.

DONATIONS TO MUSEUM.

Three human crania, viz.: An ancient Mexican, a Lenapé,
and a Congo negro. Deposited by Dr. Morton.
Specimen of Ammonites placenta, from Lowndes county,
Alabama. From Dr. Wm. Blanding.

DONATIONS TO LIBRARY.

Third Bulletin of the Proceedings of the National Institute
at Washington. Feb. 1842 to Feb. 1845. From the In-
stitute.
Catalogue of Plants collected by the Botanical department
of Providence Franklin Society, principally in Rhode
Island, in 1844. From the Society.
Boston Journal of Natural History. Vol. V, No. 1. Jan.,
1845. From the Boston Society of Natural History.
First Report on Meteorology to the Surgeon General of the
U. S. Army. By James P. Espy. From Mr. Samuel
Hazard.

The Literary Record and Journal of the Linnæan Association of Pennsylvania College. Vol. 1, No. 7. From the Association.

A History of British fossil Mammalia and Birds. By Richard Owen, F. R. S. Nos. 1 to 7. From Dr. Thomas B. Wilson.

Fifty-eighth Annual Report of the Regents of the University of the State of New York. Albany, 1845. From the Regents.

A letter was read from Dr. Edmund Ravenel, dated Charleston, S. C., April, 28, 1845, containing some interesting particulars respecting the geological position of certain strata of that State, and indicating some new localities which he had discovered for Eocene and Miocene fossils.

A communication was read from the Directors of the "Museum d'Histoire Naturelle" at Paris, dated 1st March, 1845, acknowledging the reception of certain Nos. of the Proceedings, and requesting the transmission of others which the Association had failed to receive.

Dr. Morton then proceeded to make some observations on the three human crania deposited by him this evening, but more particularly in reference to that of the Congo negro, which was presented to him by Dr. David Gilbert, of Gettysburg, in this State.

This skull pertained to an individual who could not have been more than twenty years old; and yet there is a total absence of the sagittal and coronal sutures, and the lamdoidal itself is not complete, while the temporal suture remains entirely open. Dr. Morton called the attention of the society to a communication made by him in 1841, on a skull in nearly all respects analogous to the present one, and the opinion then deduced from it, viz.: that the principal function of the sutures is to subserve the growth of bones, which they do by osseous deposition at their margins;

hence a suture in the cranium is equivalent to the epiphysis between the shaft and head of any one of the long bones.* In the present example, Dr. Morton showed that owing to the total absence of the sagittal suture, the lateral growth of the cranium has ceased at an early period of life; the presence of the lamdoidal suture has permitted of posterior elongation, and the squamous sutures being entirely open, the upward growth, corresponding to the lines of these sutures, is remarkably developed.

Dr. Morton expressed his acknowledgments to the Baron Von Gerolt, Prussian Minister at Washington, for the ancient Mexican cranium deposited this evening. It was exhumed from the cemetery of San Juan de Tlatilolco, near the city of Mexico, in which were buried great numbers of the Mexicans who were slain in defence of their city against the Spaniards, during the invasion of Cortez.

On motion of Prof. Johnson,—Resolved, That a copy of the 8th vol. of the Journal of the Academy, and a copy of vol. 1st of the Proceedings, and of vol. 2d, as far as published, be presented to the “Museum d’Histoire Naturelle.”

Stated Meeting, May 20th, 1845.

VICE PRESIDENT MORTON in the Chair.

A letter was read from Dr. Edward Hallowell, communicating some facts observed by him respecting the young of the Opossum, a number of which, with the female, had been recently captured in his neighbourhood. The letter also referred to the practice among the gallinaceous birds of devouring serpents, several interesting instances of which were mentioned.

Prof. Johnson read a portion of the report of his analysis of the specimens of Nile alluvium received from Prof. Lepsius

*Proceedings, Vol. I, August, 1841.